

**Action Plan Recommendations Report Card**

**for the**

**County of Sarasota**

**“A Tale of Two Initiatives”**

**by**

**Robert G. Marbut Jr., Ph.D.**

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**Written Report - June 19, 2015**

**Presentation - June 23, 2015**

Prepared by Robert G. Marbut Jr., Ph.D.

[www.MarbutConsulting.com](http://www.MarbutConsulting.com)

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## **Project Scope of Work**

Below is from the executed contract:

An Executive Analysis of the Sarasota County's Progress on the "Homeless Services Gap Analysis."

Project Phases: The Project will be divided into four phases, as described below:

Phase 1 (April 2015) Pre-Site Visit Research: Vendor in coordination with the Director of Homeless Services will send out a written survey to 15-20 homeless service providers asking a variety of questions regarding the 12 Action Plan Recommendations Steps that were formally adopted by Sarasota County. After compilation and evaluation of surveys, selected conference calls will be made with targeted service providers.

Phase 2 (May 2015) Site Visit Research and Review: Vendor shall conduct one extended site visit that is a minimum of 3 days and one additional site visit, of at least one day, to assess the current homeless situation in Sarasota County. This assessment will require Vendor to conduct street-level observations of areas where individuals experiencing homelessness congregate, to attend meetings with key people working on homeless issues in the County, to conduct interviews with selected agencies serving the homeless population, to meet with selected law enforcement officers and to meet with others who have significant knowledge of the current homelessness situation within the County. In addition, Vendor will hold two public forums, one in North County and one in South County, for the public to provide input for consideration. All of this information from the survey, conference calls, site visit and public forums will be reviewed through the matrix of the 12 Action Plan Recommendations. The Director of Homeless Services will help arrange the meetings and interviews and will work closely with the Vendor during the Research and Review Phase.

Phase 3 (May - June 2015) Written "Report Card": Vendor will draft a written report providing a "Report Card" on the 12 Action Step Recommendations based on his findings during the Phases 1 and 2 for addressing homelessness within Sarasota County. In addition, the report should address critical features of the "Housing First" model and how, if any, the program integrates with original 12 Action Plan Recommendations.

Phase 4 (June - July 2015) In-person Presentation of Written Report Card: Vendor will conduct one trip to Sarasota to make an in-person presentation of his Report Card to the Sarasota County Commission on a mutually agreeable date.

## Report Card Executive Summary

### Overall Grades:

- A . . . for Families with Children Experiencing Homelessness (Recs 2, 3 and 7)
- B . . . for Administrative and Support Functions (Recs 1, 5, 6, 11 and 12)
- F . . . for Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness (F for Rec 4 | I for Recs 8, 9 and 10)

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### **Individual Recommendation Grades**

Recommendations	Grades
1- Move from a Culture of Enablement to a Culture of Engagement	B
2- Establish a North County Emergency Intake Portal for Families with Children	A+
3- Establish a South County Emergency Intake Portal for Families with Children	A-
4- Establish a Men’s and Women’s Public Safety Triage and Stabilization Unit	F
5- Develop Two Master Case Management Systems	<u>A- for Families</u> Incomplete for Single Adults (Pending Recommendation 4)
6- Transform HMIS from a “Score Keeper” to a “Proactive Case Management Tool”	B+
7- Empty Your Pantry Before You Go North	A+
8- Redirect and Align “Street Feeding” Efforts with Holistic Service Programs	Incomplete (Pending Recommendation 4)
9- Harmonize and Standardize Ordinances Throughout the County	Incomplete (Pending Recommendation 4)
10- Create Homeless Street Outreach Teams and Train All LEOs within the County	Incomplete (Pending Recommendation 4)
11- Increase “Longer Term” Housing Placements	C
12- Create a High Quality and Sustainable Governance System	B

## **Report Card by Strategic Action Recommendation**

### **1 - Move from a Culture of Enablement to a Culture of Engagement**

The entire Sarasota County Community needs to move from a *Culture of Enablement* to a *Culture of Engagement* in all aspects. This includes service agencies, volunteers, staffs, donors, funders, government agencies, programs, residents, tourists and the homeless community. Free food handouts and cash from panhandling - although well intended by nice folks - actually perpetuates and increases homelessness through enablement. Rather, street handouts, food and cash donations should be redirected to high performing agencies. The mission should no longer be to “serve” the homeless community, instead the mission should be to dramatically and consequentially increase “street graduation” rates. A media and public awareness campaign needs to be developed to educate and encourage the community to move from a culture of enablement to a culture of engagement.

#### **Grade B:**

- There are many examples of how the greater Sarasota community has changed the way it thinks and provides homeless services. Many individuals, agencies and funders have embraced transformational best practices, and are shifting from a culture of enablement to a culture of engagement.
- The Sarasota Family Haven Alliance represents one of the most successful collaborations in recent Sarasota history. Traditional inter-agency silos have been shattered. The Family Haven Alliance created and led by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation in consultation with the County’s Director of Homeless Services has been a great example of the transformation to new thinking and new doing. The results in this area are nothing less than stellar.

The Family Haven Alliance is composed of the following agencies:

- Catholic Charities
  - Harvest House Transitional Centers
  - JFCS of the Suncoast
  - The Salvation Army of Sarasota
  - Schoolhouse Link (Sarasota Family YMCA)
  - Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness (SPEH)
  - United Ways 2-1-1 of Manasota
- The Season of Sharing, led by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, has made many internal process and system changes to ensure engagement rather than enablement. Additionally, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County fast-forwarded a plan to require

all of their Season of Sharing “fiscal agents” to use a common reporting/tracking tool thus improving the internal coordination of services. These enhancements to Season of Sharing will have major multi-year positive impacts to a wide range of agencies, and most importantly to the individuals and families receiving assistance.

Emergency assistance dollars, which are often the hardest to come by, are helping to keep individuals and families in their homes. The Community Foundation of Sarasota County has found that it takes \$8,000 or more to get a family back in their home once they are out of their home. In contrast, it is taking an average of about \$750 in emergency assistance for case appropriate families to stay in a home. Prevention is much more cost effective and much better on the human psyche of the family members. Season of Sharing continues to be one of the best, if not the best, emergency homeless prevention programs in the USA.

- The Patterson Foundation led a seven month intensively focused effort called “Recoding Organizational DNA” which focused on helping agencies move:
  - from Agency-Centric to System-Centric Activities,
  - from Out-put Measurements to Out-come Measurements,
  - from Enabling to Engaging Behavior.

The CEOs Agency Workgroup is an additional spin-off positive by-product of the Recoding Organizational DNA initiative.

Recoding Organizational DNA included chairs, board members, presidents, executive directors, staff and volunteers from the following agencies:

- All Faiths Food Bank
- Catholic Charities, Diocese of Venice, Inc.
- The Center of Hope of South County, Inc.
- Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
- Family Promise of Sarasota
- The Glasser/Schoenbaum Human Services Center
- Goodwill Manasota, Inc.
- Harvest House Transitional Centers
- Hope Kids Community
- Jewish Family & Children Services of the Suncoast
- Legal Aid of Manasota, Inc.
- Resurrection House, Inc.
- The Sarasota Family YMCA
- Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness, Inc.
- Trinity Without Borders, Inc.
- United Way 2-1-1 of Manasota, Inc.

- An example of this new system approach is instead of submitting multiple individual funding proposals from each agency, the County asked the Family Haven Alliance agencies to submit a singular unified and joint proposal for consideration by the County. This approach provides a significantly more holistic and strategic approach to funding targeted activities for families with children.
- Overall a new “language” of engagement is being used within most intra-agency and inter-agency interactions. A new common “language” is helpful in order to facilitate the move from “serving” the homeless community to working to “engage” the homeless community, with the mission to decrease overall and “street-level” homelessness while increasing “street graduation” rates.
- Beyond a common language, the agencies now share and use the same assessment tool, the same intake process and the same referral processes.
- As for citizen, faith-based and community service groups, the transition to a new culture has not been as robust, especially in areas such as “street feeding” and day center types of activities. The challenge is, without a 24/7 come-as-you-shelter, there is no positive alternative location with which to re-direct street-feeding efforts (see Recommendations 4 and 8).
- As for individuals experiencing homelessness, “hanging-out” is still a major challenge since a 24/7 Come-As-You-Are Center (see Recommendation 4) does not exist in which to direct engagement from their current locations in the City of Sarasota (eg the central business district and around the Salvation Army).
- It will be critical to have a comprehensive community awareness campaign once the Come-As-You-Are Center is ready to open and becomes operational. Gulf Coast Community Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the County are in an active planning process to develop a comprehensive awareness campaign. Ideally the roll-out of the awareness campaign should coincide with the opening of the Come-As-You-Are Center.

## **2 - Establish a North County *Emergency Intake Portal for Families with Children***

Establish an *Emergency Intake Portal for Families with Children* for the North County area in the City of Sarasota. This would become the “emergency room” for any homeless family with children and any unaccompanied minors residing in North County. The Portal would provide intake, stabilization, emergency housing, master case management and referral services. All homeless families and children in the North County area would start at this intake portal.

## **Grade A+:**

- Under the leadership of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, in coordination with the County, CEOs of the seven lead agencies all signed a Memorandum of Agreement to work together within a collaborative team named the Family Haven Alliance. This is a first in Sarasota County.
- The Sarasota Family Haven Alliance has provided a venue where agencies can specialize in the services that they do best, and coordinate with other agencies to provide services that they excel in. The Alliance has inspired donors to give additional funding and engaged citizens to care.
- The Harvest House Family Haven - North County Family Emergency Center is up and operational. What is so amazing beyond its operational success is the fact that the center was opened on October 1, 2014 which was less than 11 months of the formal presentation of this recommendation.
- Since the opening on October 1, 2014 to the last day of April 2015, the Harvest House Family Haven portal has provided services for 146 families (330 children and 178 adults, 508 total individuals). Of all the children, 76.9% were 10 years of age or younger.
- Harvest House Family Haven has proved to be so efficient and effective that it is about to measure the “time to service” (eg from crisis point to arrival at the Family Haven) in minutes, not days nor weeks.
- One of the most remarkable accomplishments that has resulted in the Sarasota Family Haven Alliance initiative is the substantial way in which the community has joined together in a common cause, with a common solution, and how that energy has translated into financial action.
- As for the “Family Village” recommendation for developing a transitional housing complex on the square block bounded by MLK Jr. Street - Tuttle Avenue - 25th Street - Chester Avenue, it is moving forward. Harvest House gained control of this property in April 2015 and has started renovation on the first 8 of 18 units. Contributions from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, private contributors and the County will create transitional housing opportunities for more than 75 individuals within families.
- Gulf Coast Community Foundation continues to be the convener of the Family Haven Alliance. Gulf Coast Community Foundation has been convening monthly meetings with 35 “Transformational Service” agencies for more than two years to better coordinate service delivery thus filling the gaps in services and reducing the duplication/overlap of services. Under that Family Haven Alliance umbrella, the case managers of the lead agencies meet once a week, supervisors meet almost every other week and CEOs meeting bi-monthly. As

the system matures, the need for meetings will decrease and the communication systems will likely be streamlined. The goal should be to meet less, and communicate more. Overall, Gulf Coast Community Foundation has funded and committed one-time funding of more than \$1.4 million in new services within the Family Haven Alliance.

- The YMCA Board and staff have been doing due diligence research in developing a 20-bed facility for unaccompanied youth/minors. This facility would ideally be connected to the YMCA's existing emergency Youth Shelter. The YMCA is confident they can fund the construction of such a shelter, but has yet to identify sustainable funding sources for ongoing operations.

### **3 - Establish a South County *Emergency Intake Portal for Families with Children***

Establish an *Emergency Intake Portal for Families with Children* for the South County area in Englewood (or North Port), then create satellite operations in Venice/Nokomis and North Port (or Englewood ). This would become the "emergency room" for any homeless family with children and any unaccompanied minors residing in South County. The Portal would provide intake, stabilization, emergency housing, master case management and referral services. All homeless families and children in the South County area would start at this intake portal.

#### **Grade A-:**

- The Catholic Charities Family Haven - South County Family Emergency Center is up and operational in North Port. It is also amazing that this center opened on March 6, 2015 which was less than 16 months from the formal presentation of this recommendation.
- Since the opening on March 6, 2015 to the last day of April 2015, the Catholic Charities Family Haven portal has provided services to 45 families (105 children and 58 adults, 163 total individuals). Of all the children, 60.0% were 10 years of age or younger.
- Because of the geographical distances between North Port, Englewood and Venice/Nokomis, there are logistical issues of getting families to North Port. The original report recommended having three small-satellite operations. A possible more cost effective alternative to this original recommendation could be to establish point-to-point transportation pick-ups on an as needed basis from Englewood and Venice/Nokomis to the Catholic Charities North Port Family Haven. Adding a transportation component could allow operations to be optimized within the currently existing South Portal.
- The soon-to-open Family Promise program in South County will also provide program opportunities for families within the Venice/Nokomis area.

#### **4 - Establish a Men's and Women's Public Safety Triage and Stabilization Unit**

Establish a 24/7/168/365 Men's and Women's *Public Safety Triage and Stabilization Unit* which would be a "come-as-you-are" emergency shelter. The Sarasota Sheriff's Office should be asked to be the lead coordinating agency. This would become the main intake portal for adult homeless men and women. All adult services county-wide should "spoke off" of this main hub. Once operational, all county-wide street feeding programs, food pantry programs and day-time service centers for adult homeless men and women need to be relocated within the Public Safety Triage and Stabilization Unit ("Sarasota Safe Harbor"). This should also be the location of the Master Case Managers for adult homeless men and women.

#### **Grade F:**

- The failure to overcome NIMBY'ism issues and the inability to reach an agreement with the City of Sarasota resulted in no action on this recommendation.
- Sadly, the failure to move forward with Recommendation 4 has negative impacts on the ultimate successes of Recommendations 5, 8, 9, 10 and 12, and to a lesser extent Recommendations 1 and 11.
- According to year-over-year Point-In-Time-Count data (PITC), the overall homeless rate in Sarasota County went up 17.4% and unsheltered adult street-level homelessness went up from 320 in 2014 to 324 in 2015. It is important to note that it is nationally known that the PITC generally undercounts the number of individuals experiencing homelessness.

There are two very important issues that need to be pointed out. First, according to multiple sources (eg SPEH staff and individual counters) the City of Sarasota Police Department conducted "sweeps" before and maybe even during the 24-hour data count window this year. If true, this means there would have been an even higher increase in street-level homelessness. Second, even if the potentially tainted and suppressed data set is used, all the efforts made over the last year by the City of Sarasota did not reduce the number of individuals experiencing street-level homelessness.

- One known data set that is very accurate is the Sarasota County Fire Department's monthly "Response to Homeless Population" reports. This monthly report provides very useful and validated data. This is a very good data set since the Fire Department tracks the exact location of each individual experiencing homelessness. This data has been collected for the last 22 months and is a great proxy data set for the overall homeless population size, changes in homeless population size and locations of the homeless community.

The Fire Department data shows that calls for service to individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Sarasota went up 28.3% from July 2013 to May 2014 vs. June

2014 to April 2015 (the first 11 months of data collection vs. the last 11 months of data collection). This would indicate that the real increase in street-level homelessness within the City of Sarasota is close to 28.3% and/or aggressive/risky behavior has increased emergency medical care needs by 28.3% (most likely a combination of both).

- Additionally, the Fire Department data set for May 2014 to April 2015 shows that the City of Sarasota still has the vast majority of homeless individuals within the County with 75.8% of all County service calls being within the City of Sarasota proper. This number is up from 71.8% from the first report made in November 2013 and matches several other data sets.
- The anecdotal stories told to this researcher as well as street-level observations made by this researcher all indicate increasing levels of homelessness within the City of Sarasota proper.
- Additionally, street-level observations and reports indicate the homeless community is becoming more aggressive and violent. Since the drafting of the initial report, a person was murdered in North Port, a person was stabbed in the neck at the Selby Library, a person was thrown through a downtown Sarasota store front window and a person died of massive bee bites just feet away from one of the recommended CAYA sites. All four of these incidents involved individuals who were experiencing homelessness.
- In order to break this log jam, Marbut Consulting proposes three possible alternatives within Exhibit 2 on Page 23.

### **5 - Develop Two Master Case Management Systems**

Two different Master Case Management “systems” need to be developed: one for families with children (including unaccompanied minors) and a second one for adult men and women. The two Master Case Management systems need to be embedded within the intake portals and the triage stabilization unit. “Master case management” and “agency level case management” are often wrongly presented as the same functionality. There is a major difference between master case management and agency level case management - the first is holistic case management across the entire system of all agencies while the second is only within an individual agency.

#### **Grade A- for Families | Grade Incomplete for Single Adults (Pending Recommendation 4):**

- Through the leadership of the County, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, County staff, the SPEH and United Ways 2-1-1 of Manasota, all the agencies using HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) have developed an excellent master case management system for families that continues to be improved.

NOTE: This recommendation is very interconnected with Recommendation 6 below.

- For families with children, there is now a unified and streamlined process for assessment, intake and referral.
- The Family Haven Alliance started using the Service Prioritization Decisions Assistance Tool (SPDAT) which is an evidence-informed survey and software tool. This tool works very well for adults in the USA. However, this tool has proven to be a bit “clunky” for families. The Family Haven Alliance has been talking to the developers of this tool to make it more user friendly for families.
- The Family Haven Alliance systematically reviews all their processes, procedures, guidelines and unique individual cases in order to make improvements at a series of regular meetings (eg case managers weekly, supervisors bi-weekly, executive directors bi-monthly and larger stake-holder group bi-monthly).
- In terms of an adult master case management system, no action has been taken since there has been no action taken on Recommendation 4 (eg Come-As-You-Are Center). Until the Come-As-You-Are Center becomes a reality, it will be hard if not impossible, to set up an adult master case management system.

The good news is, since so many improvements have been made in regards to HMIS/2-1-1 and since so many agencies overlap between families and adults, we would expect that an adult master case management system can be developed very quickly. Additionally, for a variety of reasons, case management systems for families are much more complex than case management systems are for single adults.

## **6 - Transform HMIS from a “Score Keeper” to a “Proactive Case Management Tool”**

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) needs to be transformed from a “Score Keeping Model” to a “Proactive Case Management Model.” To accomplish this, the software program needs a couple component upgrades and a system-wide-all-agency information release form should be utilized by all agencies. Additionally, in order to promote universal agency participation, funding to service agencies by foundations, government agencies, United Way and the Continuum of Care should become contingent on being proactive participants in HMIS.

### **Grade B+:**

- There have been many major upgrades and system improvements to the HMIS system, including integrating 2-1-1 and HMIS especially as it relates to families with children. Full implementation of the HMIS upgrades had waited for the launch and re-purposing of the United Way 2-1-1 and SPEH’s Bowman single point of entry format at 2-1-1. This was completed last month. Full integration is likely to occur within 4 months.

- Because of an increased call volume related to families with children, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County funded an additional case manager for 2-1-1.
- Major improvements have been made:
  - an universal inter-agency data release has been developed and mobilized for families,
  - universal entry is occurring for families,
  - real-time entry has increased,
  - accuracy continues to improve,
  - reports are becoming more useful and timely, but are still a bit “clunky.”
- Sarasota County now requires the use of HMIS within all homeless service agency contracts.
- In terms of families, HMIS is being transformed from a passive “score-keeper” to being a proactive case management tool within a truly integrated Master Case Management System. Additional needed improvements have been identified and are in the queue to fix/patch/upgrade.
- Overall, the HMIS system is moving in the right direction, but has more work to complete. SPEH needs to continue to improve its systems workflow in order to increase efficiencies and to make the overall system more user friendly for the partner agencies.
- If improvements continue to be made, this will become the best master case management software system for families in the USA.

### **7 - Empty Your Pantry Before You Go North**

A seasonally targeted program should be developed to address seasonal shortages in food supplies within the All Faiths Food Bank. This effort should promote cash and food donations before seasonal residents move north for the season. This “*empty your pantry before you go north*” program should be promoted through a comprehensive public service campaign.

#### **Grade A+:**

- The “CASH and Cans” (Campaign Against Summer Hunger) through herculean efforts of the All Faiths Food Bank, Gulf Coast Community Foundation and many others has become such a success that it has become the national best practice in this area.
- In 2014, the first year of CASH and Cans, the campaign raised \$1.2 million cash and collected 827,000 pounds of food. Nine new mobile pantries distributed 147,992 meals to families. The newly created Summer Backpack program had 18 sites and distributed food to 3,449 children. The newly deployed Sprout Mobile Farm Market distributed more than

84,000 units of fresh produce to 3,460 people (including 1,032 children). Partner Summer Feeding Agencies provided 1,172,222 units of food and 985,781 meals to fed 12,972 people (including 3,972 children). The enhanced School District Summer Programs provided 288,883 meals to 3,000+ children.

In total more than 15,500 children regularly received food in the Summer of 2014 compared to just 5,200 meals for the whole Summer of 2013.

- The CASH and Cans program was so successful that it won the Secretaries Award (Secretaries of HUD and USDA) for public-philanthropic partnership. The campaign was intentionally designed to be repeated annually in Sarasota, and easily scaled so that it can be replicated in other communities. As a result of this campaign, the food bank did not run out of food over the summer, and the community saw a 300% increase in the number of children receiving food over the summer break.
- To date in 2015, CASH and Cans has raised \$1.2 million and 935,000 pounds of food, with donations still coming in. Since several big-ticket start-up equipment items were purchased within the 2014 budget (eg trucks, food equipment, etc.), then means there will actually be more funds spent in 2015 on direct food and services to help individuals in need.
- Because of realized system improvements, All Faiths Food Bank has managed this increase in operating tempo with just volunteers and seasonal staff hiring. The Food Bank has not increased the full-time, year-round staffing level of the Food Bank.

### **8 - Redirect and Align “Street Feeding” Efforts with Holistic Service Programs**

Redirect “Street Feeding and Street Services” to be aligned with holistic service programs. Street feeding and street services, although well-intentioned and good-hearted, actually “enables” homeless individuals rather than “engages” homeless individuals into 24/7 holistic program services. Providing camping supplies and/or feeding in the parks, at street corners, at beaches and behind restaurants exacerbates and promotes homelessness, thus increasing the number of homeless individuals. Organizations providing street services need to be encouraged to relocate their adult services to Sarasota Safe Harbor.

### **Grade Incomplete (Pending Recommendation 4):**

- Extensive due diligence and “till-work” have occurred with faith-based and civic organizations, however until Recommendation 4 (eg a Come-As-You-Are Center) is implemented very little more can be done on this recommendation.

## **9 - Harmonize and Standardize Ordinances Throughout the County**

Ordinances should be harmonized and standardized throughout the County. These ordinances should be drafted in such away as to promote engagement into holistic programs, and not “criminalize” the condition of homelessness. It is very important to note that due to a series of court rulings (often referred to as “Pottinger”), Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) will not be able to enforce most ordinances until Sarasota Safe Harbor is fully operational on a 24/7/168/365 basis.

### **Grade Incomplete (Pending Recommendation 4):**

- A County-wide task-force of law enforcement, government attorneys, subject-matter-experts, staff and a representative of the ACLU have drafted and vetted a comprehensive set of ordinances that are not-criminalizing and would be “Pottinger” compliant once Recommendation 4 implemented (eg opening of a Come-As-You-Are Center).
- Extensive due diligence and “till-work” have occurred, however, until Recommendation 4 (eg a Come-As-You-Are Center) is implemented the different municipalities may not want to vote on the vetted ordinance package.
- It is very important to note that the proposed ordinances as well as many existing ordinances cannot be enforced until a “Pottinger” compliant facility is built and opened.

## **10 - Create Homeless Street Outreach Teams and Train All LEOs within the County**

Once Sarasota Safe Harbor and the Family Portals are almost ready to open, “homeless outreach teams” (HOTs) should then be activated 2-4 weeks before the opening of these new facilities. Street outreach teams will be critical to the success of the overall system. The best HOTs pair a social service worker with a police officer. Additionally, every LEO in the County should go through an appropriate level of homeless engagement and sensitivity training.

### **Grade Incomplete (Pending Recommendation 4):**

- Until Recommendation 4 (eg a Come-As-You-Are Center) is implemented it does not make sense to take action on this recommendation.
- The original report stated that “[i]t would likely be a waste of valuable resources to deploy teams any earlier than 2-4 weeks before the opening of these new facilities since there will be nowhere to successfully send individuals and families.” Because of volume and location

issues, dedicated HOT teams are not needed for families. Once the adult HOT teams are established, they should be cross-trained in family issues.

### **11 - Increase “Longer Term” Housing Placements**

Increase the number of “longer term” housing placements across the spectrum for men, women, families with children and unaccompanied minors. To be successful, there needs to be an increase in inventory capacity as well as improvements in service programs to better prepare individuals and families for the challenges they will face.

#### **Grade C:**

- Many different groups and individuals have been talking about this recommendation, but at the time of this report, there are only two efforts that are becoming a reality.

The first is Harvest House’s soon to open “Family Village” which will bring on-line 18 new units, housing up to 74 individuals. The purchase and renovations of the Family Village have been made possible by the Lee Wetherington Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the County and one anonymous generous donor. The Family Village is a square block bounded by MLK Jr. Street - Tuttle Avenue - 25th Street - Chester Avenue, and has been one of the worse, if not the worse, crime ridden blocks within Sarasota.

The second is five units in South County being purchased and refurbished by Catholic Charities which is being funded by Sarasota County and Catholic Charities. These five units will provide housing for up to 21 individuals. Bishop Frank Dewane and Catholic Charities representatives have stated this is just a start of what they plan to do more in the future.

Taken together, Harvest House and Catholic Charities are in the process of adding 95 beds (23 family units).

- The Salvation Army is looking at a proposed project for family housing. It is currently in the “program design” phase.
- It is important to note, that with just one exception, none of the general market housing projects being developed within the county would be defined as affordable housing.
- In many communities around the USA, local mental health authorities have been providing long-term supportive housing for individuals presenting with moderate to severe mental health diagnoses. Unfortunately, the local Sarasota mental health authority stopped such programming and liquidated their housing inventory six months ago.

- A focused effort still needs to occur to develop a holistic housing and case management program and/or center for unaccompanied youth/minors.

### Housing First:

- For more than 18 months, City of Sarasota staff and elected officials have been talking about Housing First options, but as of the time of this report, the City of Sarasota has yet to take one vote to fund a specific project, or select a specific site, or start due diligence on a specific site. If the City of Sarasota truly considers Housing First as a viable option, the City should move forward as soon as possible with specific site(s) and development plan(s).
- A note about Housing First. In essence, Housing First is life-long 100% subsidized supportive housing program for individuals experiencing homelessness. Individuals receive free housing, free utilities and free supportive services. Individuals who receive Housing First often “jump to the front of the line” and move ahead of wait-listed working poor to get housing vouchers/units.

There are two basic ways to provide Housing First. The first is a scattered-site voucher system that provides vouchers directly to individuals experiencing homelessness, and then provide supportive services and case management (this works very well for single mom/dad led families with children). The second is to build new units/complexes, and then provide supportive services and case management on site (this works very well for veterans).

The budget impact of the City’s proposed 4 year, 100 persons per year Housing First program would be significant. The calculations below uses the following assumptions for the proposed 4-year “housing first” program for 100 new individuals a year . . . these are very optimistic assumptions (eg the real costs would likely be higher):

- 100 new people a year for four years,
- Case management loads of 1:20 (housing first requires case managers),
- Case managers would be master level with base pay around \$50,000 per year plus taxes and benefits,
- \$200 utility allowance per person, per unit, per month,
- The monthly per person, per unit, per month rental would need to be \$737.50 in order to fit within the \$1,500,000 (a HIGHLY unlikely low assumption),
- Zero inflation on annualized year-to-year rentals (a HIGHLY unlikely assumption),
- A 20% drop-out in Year One and with minimal attrition over the next three years,
- Life-long support of the proposed target group of chronic homeless individuals,
- Based on a 20% drop out rate, 320 individuals would be in the program in Year 5,
- No new people into the program after Year 4 of the program,
- Zero allocation for program administrative and oversight costs.

Year 1 = \$1,500,000 total  
(Class 1 for Year 1 = \$1.5 million)

Year 2 = \$2,740,000 total  
(Class 1 = \$1.24 million plus Class 2 = \$1.5 million)

Year 3 = \$3,980,000 total  
(Classes 1 and 2 = \$1.24 million each plus Class 3 = \$1.5 million)

Year 4 = \$5,220,000 total  
(Classes 1, 2 and 3 = \$1.24 million each plus Class 4 = \$1.5 million)

Years 5 and beyond = \$4,960,000 total every year  
(Classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 = \$1.24 million each)

This researcher believes the proposed 100 persons per year within a \$1.5 million budget is unrealistic. This researcher believes the budget would need to be increased by at least 16-23% more per year to fully fund 100 persons in Year 1 (at least \$240,000 more per year).

Virtually every agency administrator interviewed for this report said there is almost no availability of affordable units in which to use vouchers. The administrators at United Way 2-1-1 said there have been cases where individuals have had vouchers in hand, but could not find an apartment to use it within the 120-day time period to find housing. One person within the affordable housing community said there is a 3-month wait to get housing. One staff person within a community foundation stated that the vacancy rate for affordable housing in Sarasota is now “functionally zero.”

It is therefore unrealistic that any voucher program could work as long as available affordable housing remained functionally at zero. A more practical scenario would be to fund and build housing stock dedicated for individuals experiencing homelessness, but this too is very expensive.

The creation of 320 housing first units vis-a-vis construction (rather than the use of vouchers) would cost at the very least \$41,250,000 for construction plus the cost of land. For this report, 320 is used since the above assumptions assume a 20% drop out within the first year of each class.

If 400 units were to be constructed, it would cost at least an additional \$10,312,500 for construction plus the cost for additional land (the total would be at least \$51,562,500 plus the cost land).

Additionally, on an annual basis funds would be needed for the upkeep and maintenance costs of the facilities. Also, assuming the same assumptions above (eg master level case managers, 20:1 case management load, etc.), the master case managers would cost about \$1,050,000 - \$1,275,000 per year to serve a census of 320.

If these costs are attainable and sustainable by the City of Sarasota, the City of Sarasota is encouraged to move forward as fast as it can with their plan on the funding, siting and development of a significant amount of Housing First units, especially for families with children and veterans.

- Low Income Housing Tax Credits should also be looked at as soon as possible.

## **12 - Create a High Quality and Sustainable Governance System**

Governance and leadership of the new and improved holistic homeless service system is critical. In order to reduce role ambiguity and to improve service delivery it is recommended that two governance systems be established - one for families with children which includes unaccompanied minors and a second one for adult men and women.

### **Grade B:**

- The County's Director of Homeless Services has successfully become a synergizing strategic coordinator of activities throughout the County between funders, stakeholders and agencies. He is clearly seen by most agencies as the leader on homeless issues, policies and planning.
- The Family Haven Alliance led by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation has become a highly functional leadership and governance body for homelessness relating to families with children.
- The governance around adult homeless issues continues to be a challenge. This issue will likely resolve itself once Recommendation 4 is implemented (eg establishment of a Come-As-You-Are Center). Once there is movement on Recommendation 4, a similar and parallel structure to the Family Haven Alliance should be established for adult homelessness, ideally led by the Sheriff's Office.
- Some parts of the administrative governance infrastructure are being led by SPEH, while other parts are being led by the County. At some point in the near future, a possible merger of functional governance activities and structure may want to be investigated and pursued.
- The Patterson Foundation led a very successful leadership and capacity building effort called "Recoding Organizational DNA" which focused on helping 16 agencies move:
  - from Agency-Centric to System-Centric,
  - from Out-put Measurements to Out-come Measurements,
  - from Enabling to Engaging.

- Across the nation and many communities within Florida, local mental health authorities and substance abuse service providers have merged into one behavioral health agency (or were already one agency). These mergers have reduced administrative costs and streamlined service delivery. If this was to occur in Sarasota, this would provide an opportunity to co-locate and integrate comprehensive behavioral health services (eg mental health and substance abuse services) with homeless services onto one campus.
- It is very important to note that almost all of the agencies and community foundations have significantly increased funding for new and improved homeless services. The Gulf Coast Community Foundation has spent and/or committed more than \$2.2 million for new one-time homeless service initiatives. The Community Foundation of Sarasota County's Season of Sharing program is now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year and has significantly increased its annual Season of Sharing funding to more than \$2 million. The Patterson Foundation funded the very successful Recoding Organizational DNA initiative. However, with the very important exceptions of \$256,000 annually in new funds and the possible future support of CAYA from the County, the level of "net-new" annual governmental spending is basically what it was 2 years ago.

It is important to note that the County has spent \$260,000 in one-time capital funding projects and has provided \$700,000 in one-time CDBG pass-through dollars. The County has also realigned about \$229,000 annually for homeless services and created the Director of Homeless Services position.

- As expectations rise for improving services (higher quality), and as expectations rise for expanding services (higher quantity), funding levels will also have to rise. Over the next year, the key stakeholders should start developing sustainability strategies to fund the improved and expanded services.

NOTE: This is a "Report Card" of the original 12 recommendations presented by Marbut Consulting on November 25, 2013. It is not a "report card" of the County's reconstituted goals nor is it a report card on the City of Sarasota's most recent plan.

**Exhibit 1 -  
Public Safety Triage and Stabilization Site Evaluation Criterion**

Based on my research and observations to date, a Public Safety Triage and Stabilization Unit is critically needed in order to successfully address street-level and chronic homelessness in Sarasota.

A Public Safety Triage and Stabilization Unit, sometimes called a “come-as-you-are-shelter” or a “low-demand-shelter” should include a holistic and comprehensive 24/7 programming.

It is very important to understand that homeless individuals do not “graduate” from street life back into general society if they are enabled to stay on the streets, in parks or in encampments. Likewise, homeless individuals do not graduate from street-life while being incarcerated.

The most successful and proven way to increase the rate of street graduations is for individuals to be in formal programs that provide holistic, transformational services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Holistic and transformational means comprehensive services including master case management, behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, life skills training, job training, job placement, etc.

This researcher waited to start possible site evaluations until after the results from a comprehensive, countywide field study of unsheltered homeless adults was completed. Without this data in hand, it would have been impossible to evaluate specific locations.

Based on national best practices found in dozens of other communities, the following are the criterion that was used to evaluate sites:

- In order to reduce pedestrian and bicycle traffic passing through neighborhoods, and to increase efficiencies within the overall service system, this Triage and Stabilization Unit ideally should be located within a short walking distance of existing programs, preferably between service agency anchors.
- In order to maximize jail diversion for individuals whose legal involvement may be a result of untreated mental illness or substance abuse disorders, the Public Safety Triage and Stabilization Unit should be within a short drive of the County Jail.
- In order to improve neighborhood quality of life, it is critical to have existing ergonomic natural and/or industrial buffers around the facility and/or have the ability to create buffers.
- In order to save money and ramp-up quickly, the site needs to be readily available for use (eg there needs to be a willing seller and/or the property be owned by local government).

- In order to be a good steward of taxpayers' dollars, the cost of acquiring the land needs to be affordable.
- In order to be cost effective, the cost to build and/or renovate and/or install buildings needs to be affordable.
- In order to be cost effective, the establishment of support infrastructure and utilities needs to be affordable.
- In order not to waste taxpayers' dollars, the facility needs to be "right sized." We do not want to over-build a facility that has wasted space nor do we want to under-build a facility in such a way that hinders program and operational functionality.
- In order to start helping individuals, reduce fatalities and get community relief as soon as possible, the ramp-up time of a site should be short.
- Are there any site-specific impediments that might stop or delay the "go-live" date of its operation?

It is important to note that this researcher never saw a map of any political districts within Sarasota County. Staffs of the County and the Cities within the County were asked not to provide any maps that contained political districts.

The main goal is to pick the site that is in the best overall interest of Sarasota and one that promotes the operational success of Sarasota Safe Harbor. The hope is the site selection will not get bogged down by NIMBY'ism nor political rivalries.

**Exhibit 2 -**  
**A Note About Possible Public Safety Triage and Stabilization (CAYA) Sites**

In order to break the log jam regarding the location of the Come-As-You-Are Center, Marbut Consulting proposes the following three possible alternatives:

- A1- Pursue the “3 to 1 Recommendation” which was developed by the agencies *CEO’s Group* led by Kurt Stringfellow who is the the President and CEO of the Sarasota Family YMCA. Their group’s recommendation is to locate 24/7 homeless service operations at the existing Salvation Army on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Then in trade:
- + move Resurrection House the Salvation Army location,
  - + stop the night-time Salvation Army program,
  - + not build a separate Come-As-You-Are Center.

In other words, instead of 3 different homeless operations spread over the north-central area, only have one at the existing Salvation Army. The Salvation Army site has an added benefit of being directly across the street from the Crisis Stabilization Unit run by Coastal Behavioral Healthcare.

This operation should be run by the Sheriff’s Office and be “Pottinger” compliant thus allowing engagement of individuals that are “hanging-out” to come into the 24/7 center.

- A2- Same as A1 above, but instead of consolidating services at the Salvation Army site, consolidate the services at the current Harvest House Main Campus at 209 North Lime. This site would garner all the same benefits of A1 but be located east of State Highway 301. This location would also come on-line much faster than the A1 site if it was blessed by the City of Sarasota. Additionally, this site would be significantly less expensive than A1 (eg lower purchase cost, easier renovations and not have to pay for relocation of existing social services). Based on the criterion in Exhibit 1 on Page 21, this site was determined by Marbut Consulting to be the best overall site during the original study phase.
- A3- Have the County establish a Come-As-You-Are Center that is consistent with the established criteria (See Exhibit 1) in the unincorporated area of the County within 1/4 mile or so of the City of Sarasota. This would get all the benefits of the original Recommendation 4 made in November 2013 and is likely less expensive than A1 above. Several possible sites were identified in the original report that meet the outlined criterion in the original report (see the criterion in Exhibit 1 on Page 21 of this report and see sites in the original report). The one and only real down side of A3 is it would extend the “crumb trail” longer than it would be if it was within the City of Sarasota closer to existing agencies such as the crisis units.

## **Exhibit 3 - The Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation**

### ***The Measuring Stick Moving from Enablement to Engagement***

After visiting 237 homeless service providers in 12 states and the District of Columbia, the following *Seven Guiding Principles* were commonly found to be the best practices in the USA. These *Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation* are used as key measuring sticks when reviewing homeless service providers in Sarasota as well as the overall service network within Sarasota County.

#### **1. Move to a Culture of Transformation (versus the Old Culture of Warehousing):**

Homeless individuals must be engaged and no longer enabled. Everybody within the services delivery system (eg general public, media, elected politicians, appointed officials, monitors, boards, staffs and volunteers of service agencies and most importantly the homeless themselves) must embrace a culture of transformation. A culture, that through the help of others, homeless individuals can transform and integrate themselves back into society. For moral and fiscal reasons, homelessness must become an unacceptable condition that is not tolerated in the USA.

#### **2. Co-location and Virtual E-integration of as Many Services as Possible:**

In order to increase success, all services within a service area must be e-integrated. Virtual e-integration improves coordination of services, enhances performance, reduces “gaming” of the system, engages individuals on the margin of society and increases cost efficiencies within and between agencies. Furthermore, whenever financially possible, services should be co-located. Co-location goes beyond virtual e-integration by increasing the number of “service hits” into a shorter period of time through the reduction of wasted time in transit and minimization of mishandled referrals. Co-location also increases the supportive “human touch.”

#### **3. Must Have a Master Case Management System That is Customized:**

Because there are so many different service agencies helping homeless individuals (eg government at multi-levels, non-profits and faith-based), it is critical that ONE person coordinates the services an individual receives and to do so in a customized fashion. The types of service provided is critical, but what is more important is the sequencing and frequency of customized services.

**4. Reward Positive Behavior:**

Positive behavior of individuals should be rewarded with increased responsibilities and additional privileges. Privileges such as higher quality sleeping arrangements, more privacy and elective learning opportunities should be used as rewards. It is important that these rewards be used as “tools” to approximate the “real world” in order to increase sustainable reintegration into society.

**5. Consequences for Negative Behavior:**

Too often there are no consequences for negative behavior of individuals. Unfortunately, this sends a message that bad behavior is acceptable. Within the transformational process, it is critical to have swift and proportionate consequences.

**6. External Activities Must be Redirected or Stopped:**

External activities such as “street feeding” must be redirected to support the transformation process. In most cases, these activities are well-intended efforts by good folks; however, these activities are very enabling and often do little to engage homeless individuals.

**7. Panhandling Enables the Homeless and Must Be Stopped:**

Unearned cash is very enabling and does not engage homeless individuals in job and skills training which is needed to end homelessness. Additionally, more often than not, cash is not used for food and housing but is instead used to buy drugs and alcohol which further perpetuates the homeless cycle. Homeless individuals who are panhandling should be engaged into the transformational process. Furthermore, most panhandlers are not truly homeless but are preying on the good nature of citizens to get tax-free dollars.

## **Exhibit 4 - Robert G. Marbut Jr., Ph.D. Biography**

First as a volunteer, then later as a San Antonio City Councilperson and a homeless service agency President/CEO, Dr. Robert Marbut has worked on homeless issues for more than three decades.

In 2007, frustrated by the lack of real improvement, and as part of the concept development for the Haven for Hope Campus, Dr. Marbut conducted a nationwide best practices study of homeless services. After personally visiting 237 homeless service facilities, in 12 states and the District of Columbia, he developed *The Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation*. Since then, Dr. Marbut has visited a total of 698 operations in 21 states plus Washington, DC and Mexico City, DF.

These Seven Guiding Principles of Transformation are used in all aspects of his work to create holistic, transformative environments in order to reduce homelessness.

Dr. Marbut was a White House Fellow to President George H.W. Bush and a former Chief of Staff to San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros.

He earned a Ph. D. from The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas in International Relations (with an emphasis in international terrorism and Wahhabism), Political Behavior and American Political Institutions/Processes from the Department of Government.

He also has two Master of Arts degrees, one in Government from The University of Texas at Austin and one in Criminal Justice from the Claremont Graduate School. His Bachelor of Arts is a Full Triple Major in Economics, Political Science and Psychology (Honors Graduate) from Claremont McKenna (Men's) College.

Dr. Marbut also has completed three post-graduate fellowships, one as a White House Fellow (USA's most prestigious program for leadership and public service), one as a CORO Fellow of Public and Urban Affairs and one as a TEACH Fellow in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Qatar (1 of 13 USA educators selected).

### **Contact Information:**

Robert G. Marbut Jr., Ph.D.  
6726 Wagner Way  
San Antonio, TX 78256

www.MarbutConsulting.com  
MarbutR@aol.com  
210-260-9696

June 22, 2015

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